DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 340 IR 051 812

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TITLE Research on the Impact of School Library Media Programs on Student Achievement.
PUB DATE 2 Nov 84
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Librarians (Atlanta, GA, November 2, 1984).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Correlation; Educational Background; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Expenditure per Student; *Learning Resources Centers; Literature Reviews; Media Specialists; *Professional Personnel; *Reading Skills; *School Funds; School Libraries; School Surveys; *Study Skills

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes an investigation of the relationship between public elementary school students' achievement in reading and study skills and several aspects of the library media program. Data were collected from a statewide survey of library media programs and personnel, district summaries of reading achievement scores for fourth and seventh graders, and financial data regarding State Equalized Valuation (SEV) and per-pupil expenditures for instruction. Major study findings consider the effect of professional personnel in schools on student achievement in reading, study skills, and use of newspapers at the seventh-grade level, and student access to the library media center; the curricular role of the library media specialist relative to student achievement in reading at the fourth-grade level; the correlation in districts with professional library media personnel between SEV and instructional expenditures per pupil and between overall student achievement in reading and instructional expenditures; the likelihood of districts with higher SEV and total instructional expenditures per pupil having professional media personnel at the elementary level; and the relationship of the educational background of the library media specialist to his/her curricular role, overall student achievement in reading at the fourth-grade level, and student access at both levels. A summary of related research and a 37-item bibliography are provided. (KM)

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RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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November 2, 1984

IR051812

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THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

Elaine K. Didier, University of Michigan

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To investigate the relationship between public elementary students' achievement in reading and study skills and several aspects of the library media program

* ratio of professional personnel/building
* education of personnel
* curricular role
* student access to the library media center
* instructional expenditures per pupil
* State Equalized Valuation (S.E.V.)

MAJOR HYPOTHESES

* Student attainment of reading and study skills will be significantly greater in districts with a full time media specialist per building.
* There is a significant positive relationship between education of media personnel and their curricular role.
* There is a significant positive relationship between the presence of a full-time media specialist and student access to the media center.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of data

* Data from a state-wide survey of library media programs and personnel (85% response)
* District summaries of reading achievement scores for 4th and 7th graders on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), a mandatory objective-referenced test administered each fall to 4th, 7th and 10th graders
* Financial data regarding State Equalized Valuation (S.E.V.) and per-pupil expenditures for instruction

Sample

* Districts were selected for inclusion in the study on the basis of the ratio of professional personnel per building serving 3rd and 6th grade students, i.e. the year prior to taking the test
* Total sample = 94
  47 districts with 1:1 ratio
  47 districts with 0:1 ratio

MAJOR FINDINGS

1) Student achievement in reading, study skills and use of newspapers was significantly greater at the seventh grade level in schools with library media personnel as compared to schools without. Not at 4th grade level

2) Student access to the library media center was significantly greater at both grade levels in schools with professional library media personnel than in schools without.

3) The curricular role of the library media specialist was positively related to student achievement in reading at the fourth grade level.

4) There was a strong positive correlation between S.E.V. and instructional expenditures per pupil in districts with professional library media personnel.

5) There was a moderately positive correlation between overall student achievement in reading and instructional expenditures in districts with library media personnel.

6) Districts with higher S.E.V. and total instructional expenditures per pupil were more likely to have professional media personnel at the elementary level.

Puzzlements

7) In schools with professional personnel, student access to the media center was inversely related to overall student achievement (percentage of high scoring students).

8) The education of the library media specialist was inversely related to curricular role and overall student achievement in reading at the fourth grade level, and to student access at both grade levels.

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

1) Research supports the finding that the presence of library media programs can be related to:

a) the inculcation of library skills (McConnaha, McMillen, Wilson, Yarling)

b) overall achievement (DeBlauw, Gaver, McMillen, Wilson)

c) achievement in specific subject areas or of specific types of skills (Becker, DeBlauw, Didier, Monahan, Wilson)

2) Research shows that knowledge of library skills can be related to the improvement of:

a) student achievement (Gengler, Greve, Hale, Harmer, McMillen, Yarling)

b) performance on standardized tests (Gaver)

c) grade-point average (Snider)

3) Research shows that the level of library media service, as determined by the quality and size of the collection, number and education of personnel, or amount of library instruction/program activity, can be related to the improvement of elementary and secondary students':

a) knowledge of library skills (Ainsworth, McConnaha, McMillen, Thorne, Wilson, Yarling)

b) overall educational achievement (Greve)

c) achievement in specific subject areas or of specific types of skills (Bailey, Barrilleaux, Didier, Gengler, Hale, Harmer, Hastings and Tanner, McMillen, Masterton, Thorne)

4) Research shows that the level of high school library service available, as defined by the size of the collection alone, cannot be related to subsequent overall academic performance of college students (Harkin, Walker).

5) Research shows that socio-economic factors are not necessarily related to library media programs (Gaver, Wilson) although they may influence the amount of funding and utilization by various groups (Natarella).

6) Research shows that the nature and extent of the education of the library media specialist can be related to:

a) the number and quality of library media program services provided (Gaver, Hodowanec, Loertscher and Land, Natarella, Wert)

b) the amount and quality of curricular and instructional involvement (Hodges)

7) Research shows that the curricular and instructional roles of the library media specialist and library media center can be related to:

a) teacher and administrator expectations (Hodges, Johnson, Mohajerin and Smith)

b) teacher and administrator competency with media, and their attitudes toward and utilization of library media services (Blazek, Ducat, Griffin, Hsu, Newman, Rogers)

c) students' academic ability in general and their reading ability in particular (Ducat)

d) teachers' education (nature and extent), sex and years of experience (Griffin, Stroud)

e) library media specialists' years of experience (Stroud)

f) the size of the media staff (Hodges)

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